

VZCZCXRO5872

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RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHTRO RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUCNDT #0510/01 1622134
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 102134Z JUN 08
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4407
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 1598
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY 1511
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY 1148
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 000510

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [CY](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: SRSG ZERIHOON BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL ON UNFICYP

¶1. (SBU) Summary: UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) SRSG Taye-Brook Zerihoun reported to the Security Council on June 9 on recent developments on Cyprus. He said that since the election of President Christofias in February there is a new spirit of cooperation on the island and Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Talat have launched a "credible process" for resolution of the Cyprus problem. He anticipated that the parties would move to formal talks soon and said the SYG has already taken steps toward the appointment of a special adviser. Zerihoun warned, however, that increased use of the media as a negotiating tool recently is a negative development. He underscored that the continued involvement of the Security Council in the Cyprus problem is critical and said the prospects for a sustainable settlement have never been better. UK Deputy Permrep Pierce said the UK "stands solidly behind the May 23 statement that Cyprus will be composed of two constituent states of equal status." Russian Deputy Permrep Dolgov said that as the settlement process moves forward we should "not impose recipes for arbitration." Ambassador Khalilzad said that we look forward to the two leaders' next meeting in the second half of June and hope the technical committees and working groups will increase the pace of their work before then. End Summary.

SRSG Zerihoun Delivers First Briefing To UNSC

¶2. (SBU) In his first appearance before the Security Council, UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) SRSG Taye-Brook Zerihoun reported on June 9 on the main developments over the reporting period. He said that since the election of President Christofias in February there is a new spirit of cooperation on the island and Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Talat have seized the moment to launch a "credible process" for resolution of the Cyprus problem. He said that on May 23, the leaders had agreed on a common vision as a basis for negotiations and an endgame for the peace process, reaffirming their commitment to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality and a federal government with a single international personality with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot states of equal status. Zerihoun said both leaders had shown strong leadership and made bold concessions, being firm against their own naysayers. Both leaders had also "made steps for one another," said Zerihoun, "as they are aware of the other's limitations and we cannot underestimate the importance of their personal chemistry."

¶3. (SBU) Zerihoun said "it is expected that the working groups and technical committees will draw on a considerable body of work from the past decade" because if the groups can narrow the gaps in positions now then the two leaders will need to do less in high-level negotiations later. Zerihoun anticipated that the parties would make sufficient progress

in the current preparatory phase of negotiations to move to formal talks and said that SYG Ban has already taken steps toward the appointment of a special adviser. Zerioun also stressed that direct contact with the Turkish Cypriot community will benefit all Cypriots, saying "it is argued that greater economic and social parity between the sides will facilitate reunification and make it more likely." Zerioun warned, however, that increased use of the media as a negotiating tool recently on the island is a negative development. He underscored that the continued involvement of the Security Council in the Cyprus problem is critical and said the prospects for a sustainable settlement have never been better.

Statements By Security Council Members

14. (SBU) UK Deputy Permrep Pierce praised recent progress on Cyprus and said "the UK stands solidly behind the May 23 statement that Cyprus will be composed of two constituent states of equal status." Pierce also stressed the necessity of rules-based management of the buffer zone and called for all to support UNFICYP's 1989 aide memoire on this subject.

15. (SBU) Russian Deputy Permrep Dolgov said he believed the working groups and technical committees would be productive and provide a good basis for the resumption of talks. He stressed that as the process moves forward we should learn lessons from the past and "not impose recipes for arbitration that one or more of the parties will reject." Chinese Deputy Permrep Liu expressed satisfaction with the prevailing atmosphere on Cyprus and progress this year, saying China

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appreciated the courage of Christofias and political will demonstrated by both leaders. He added that China supports the appointment of a special adviser.

16. (SBU) French Deputy Permrep Lacroix said that since the March 21 meeting of the two leaders there has been a real spirit of hope. He commented that the goal for Cyprus is a federal state based on Security Council resolutions and that we have seen that "when political will is present we can overcome the problems of the past."

17. (SBU) Ambassador Khalilzad praised recent positive developments on Cyprus including the March 21 and May 23 meetings between the leaders and the re-opening of Ledra Street crossing. He said that we look forward to the two leaders' next meeting in the second half of June and hope the technical committees and working groups will increase the pace of their work before then. He concluded that with two pro-unification leaders in place, 2008 is a time of real opportunity for progress towards a comprehensive settlement.

Khalilzad